CLINICAL BIOCHEMICAL METHODS. By A. L. Tárnoky, B.Sc.Tech., Ph.D. (Pp. x + 239; figs. 11. 50s.) London: Hilger & Watts Ltd., 1958.

In this new textbook the author describes the biochemical analyses in routine use in the laboratory of the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading. It is essentially a practical book. Few alternative methods are given and those procedures which require expensive and highly specialized apparatus have been omitted.

The book is well planned; it is printed on good quality paper and the type is bold and distinct. The contents are listed alphabetically and so descriptions of methods can quickly be found. Accurate stepwise directions are given for each procedure. Subject index and author index are complete and there are eighty-four references.

Certain fairly common biochemical tests have been omitted and not all can have been excluded on the grounds of expense or need for specialized apparatus: namely, electrophoresis of cerebro-spinal fluid protein, determination of blood pyruvic acid, estimation of serum glutamic oxalacetic transaminase and the cephalin-cholesterol flocculation test. Estimation of ketosteroids and amino-acid chromatography are beyond the scope of this book. A method for the quantitative fractionation of serum proteins by electrophoresis is explained, but their respective normal ranges are not disclosed. The modern technique of estimating sweat electrolytes is set down in detail, although a word of caution might well have been added to the instructions dealing with the placing of the patient in a plastic bag, covering with blankets, and allowing him to sweat for one to two hours—a dangerous procedure in a young child. The benzidine test is the only one given for detecting the presence of occult blood in fæces; this is unfortunate, because for the past year this substance has no longer been manufactured on account of its carcinogenic properties. Determination of the basal metabolic rate is well described, although few workers can spare the time to subject the patient to the recommended procedure of three recordings on two successive mornings.

These criticisms apart, this book will be of value to a laboratory where uncomplicated routine biochemical procedures are carried out. There is a valuable chapter on analytical control. C. C. K.

THE ART OF CLINICAL REFRACTION. By Theodore H. Whittington. (Pp. ix + 286 + vii; figs. 78. 30s.) London: Oxford University Press, 1958.

To the physician with an interest in ophthalmology the fascination of the subject is the manner in which so many different fields of knowledge are brought to bear on the eye, and are found to throw each its own light on the efficiency of the individual's sight or lack thereof. From the combination of anatomy and optics is drawn the science of refraction and it is the virtue of this volume that, as its title implies, there is added to the lucid account of the scientific facts an informed and balanced review of the art whereby these facts are used for the benefit of the individual patient.

Dr. Whittington has based his book on lectures given to post-graduates and medical students and has drawn on the experiences of many years to illustrate with case histories the varying aspects of his subject. He touches on many points on which information is not readily found in medical textbooks, notably the chapters on modern optical lenses and other aids to vision. Chapters are devoted to binocular vision and to squint, and the beginner will find correct lines laid down for him in the section devoted to consulting-room practice.

The more experienced practitioner of ophthalmology will also find that instead of dipping in here and there he will be drawn on from one chapter to another until the whole has been covered. This is due to pleasant and businesslike format of the book and the manner in which the author has interspersed his material with clinical and other observations which show how much he has made his own the art of clinical refraction which he sets out so attractively for his readers. J. A. C.